

RIVERWOODS
CLASS II NATURAL SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Shelby

ACREAGE: 21

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Germantown

OWNERSHIP: Memphis Garden Club

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1978

DESCRIPTION: Riverwoods is a 21 acre natural area located along the Wolf River in Germantown just outside of Memphis in Shelby County. Riverwoods is situated in a densely urban setting but provides refuge for plants and wildlife. It represents a small biological island that was once surrounded by forested land when designated in 1978. The property was donated to the Memphis Garden Club in 1973.

The vegetation within the natural area is a small remnant of different forest types including the mixed mesophytic, oak-hickory, and a bottomland hardwood forest. The topography of the site reveals that floodplain terraces were once periodically flooded prior to river channelization. The upper terrace of the floodplain provide excellent site conditions that support a small example of the mixed mesophytic and oak-hickory forest as described by Lucy Braun for the Western Mesophytic Region of the Eastern Deciduous Forest. Forest trees found here include tulip poplar, shagbark hickory, white oak, and sweet gum. Examples of large diameter trees like cherrybark oak and bald cypress also occur at Riverwoods.

The spring flowering shrub buckeye is present and provides wonderful spring color. Some colorful herbaceous plants include violets, Solomon's seal, Indian pink, trillium, and spiderwort. Riverwoods is an example of how a small urban natural area can be impacted by external threats as the surrounding forest size has diminished and common privet, a species native to Asia, has invaded.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Kathy Shannon, President Memphis Garden Club, TN (901) 682-0727. Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church St., 14th Floor, L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447 (615) 532-0436.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access is limited, no parking or trails provided at this time.

DIRECTIONS: Contact the Garden Club of Memphis or the Division of Natural History for location.